

REMARKS

In order to more clearly claim the present invention substitute claims 33-59 are submitted herewith. Claims 1-32 are cancelled. The new claim set is provided in order to more clearly recite what is understood as the invention and is not intended as being a response to the rejections or cited references. The rejections are respectfully traversed as noted more fully below. In any event it respectfully is submitted that the claims now are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,573,046 ("Venooker"). Venooker fails to teach or suggest the present invention. For instance, it fails to teach or suggest venting through a barrier wall, venting communication via the coupler between a fluid container and a processor to which it is coupled, or bi-directional fluid flow as understood in the context of the present invention. Venooker is understood to relate to a valve assembly for a fluid delivery system aspirating liquid from a bottle. To the extent it provides venting, it is to the exterior of the coupler rather than an area within a cylindrical ring.

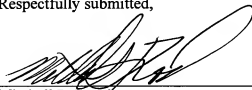
Claims 26 and 29-32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,578,494 ("Clark"). As understood, Clark relates to "aspiration of reagents from the reagent container 441 with a pipette probe" (col. 46, lines 60-62). It is not understood to provide the type of venting as recited in the claims or a bi-directional fluid flow. Hence, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection in view of Clark has been traversed.

Claim 25 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Venooker in view of Clark. As discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that neither Venooker nor Clark, either alone or in combination with one another teach or suggest the present invention and accordingly the rejection respectfully is traversed.

Claims 27 and 28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark. As discussed above, it respectfully is submitted that Clark does not teach or suggest the present invention and accordingly the rejection is traversed.

Based on the foregoing, favorable consideration and allowance of the claims is solicited. If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this and concurrent replies to charge payment (or credit any overpayment) to Deposit Account No. 50-2298 for any additional required fees.

Respectfully submitted,



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